

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5825

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, EPAP, CS

SUBJECT: MEAT IMPORT PROGRAM

REF: STATE 290045; SAN JOSE 5728

1. ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER FERNANDO DEL CASTILLO INFORMED CHARGE DEC 2 THAT EVEN THOUGH TIMING WAS VERY INOPPORTUNE, GOCR HAD NO PRACTICAL CHOICE BUT TO PARTICIPATE IN MEAT NEGOTIATIONS IN WASHINGTON. HE ONSTATED THAT HAKTE WITH WHICH THE INVITATION HAD BEEN ISSUED AND THE SHORT TIME ALLOWED FOR PREPARATION FOR THE MEETING MADE IT APPEAR THAT GOVERNMENTS WERE BEING SUMMONED RATHER THAN INVITED TO WASHINGTON. HE WONDERED WHETHER USG WOULD BE PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE LEVELS OF 1977 MEAT EXPORTS TO U.S. OR WHETHER IT WAS USG INTENTION TO IMPOSE PREDETERMINED LEVELS ON PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES.

2. DEL CASTILLO SAID THAT THERE WAS STILL A FEELING OF DISAPPOINTMENT WITHIN GOCR OVER USG INABILITY TO HONOR WHAT GOCR HELD WAS FIRM COMMITMENT TO INCREASE 1976 VRS LEVEL. HE UNDERSTOOD WHY THIS HAD HAPPENED BUT SAID THAT NEVERTHELESS GOCR DELEGATION WOULD BE INSTRUCTED TO RAISE THIS ISSUE DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS. OTHER POINTS GOCR INTENDS TO RAISE, HE SAID, INCLUDE: A) COSTA RICA'S TRACK RECORD AS A FAITHFUL SUPPLIER OF

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U.S. MARKET DURING YEARS OF SHORT SUPPLY IN U.S.;

B) COSTA RICA'S NEED, AS DEVELOPING COUNTRY, FOR INCREASED ACCESS TO U.S. MARKETS; AND C) U.S. RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE SPECIAL EFFORT TOWARD ONE OF FEW REMAINING DEMOCRACIES IN L.A.

3. PRIVATE SECTOR MEMBERS OF GOCR DELEGATION HAVE INFORMED EMBOFFS THAT DELEGATION MAY ALSO PRESS TO GET FREE ENTRY THIS YEAR FOR MEAT NOW BEING HELD IN BOND IN U.S. OTHER POINTS THEY MAY WISH TO RAISE INCLUDE:

A) ELIMINATION OF LOOPHOLES IN PROGRAM WHICH HAVE THE EFFECT OF REDUCING LEVEL AVAILABLE FOR ALLOCATION TO PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES;
AND B) DESIRABILITY OF A HEMISPHERIC OR CENTRAL AMERICAN SHORTFALL DISTRIBUTION SCHEME.

4. COMMENT: EVEN THOUGH THERE IS OBVIOUS DISCONTENT OVER HASTINESS OF NEGOTIATIONS, GOCR CAN BE COUNTED UPON TO TAKE NEGOTIATIONS SERIOUSLY AND TO MAKE REAL EFFORT TO PRESENT BEST POSSIBLE CASE FOR INCREASED LEVEL OF MEAT EXPORTS TO U.S. DELEGATION'S TARGET LEVEL WILL BE IN EXCESS OF 70 MILLION POUNDS, BUT REAL EXPECTATION WILL BE MUCH LESS. HOWEVER, IF COSTA RICA IS GIVEN NO MORE THAN THIS YEAR'S QUOTA PLAN A PROPORTIONATE SHARE OF THE ANNUAL INCREASE IN THE GLOBAL LEVEL, THEY WILL WONDER WHY IT WAS NECESSARY TO COME TO WASHINGTON FOR NEGOTIATIONS.
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